

# Deinstitutionalization Coalition of Saskatchewan

Founding members: Saskatchewan Association of Community Living and People First Saskatchewan  
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## Media Release

**For Immediate Release**

**May 1, 2007**

### **People with Disabilities and Advocates Demand the Closure of Valley View Centre**

In solidarity with the individuals with intellectual disabilities who remain institutionalized without a voice, the Deinstitutionalization Coalition of Saskatchewan (DCS) is demanding the expedited closure of Valley View Centre (VVC) in Moose Jaw. The DCS is calling for a well-resourced, publicly announced closure plan with the goal of closure by 2010 and a plan that will include respectful, individualized living/day supports for every person from VVC.

“We stand together in our belief that a life in the community is a right of all people, no exceptions,” says Laurie Larson, Co-Chair of the DCS. “Institutions are unnecessary, indefensible and a blatant abuse of human rights. Closed environments are inherently abusive by their power structure, and just like residential schools and orphanages, someday society will look with disgust at the injustice of institutions like Valley View Centre. It is a disgrace that Canada has not moved past this archaic practice that was built on prejudices, myths about disability, and a denial of individuality and basic humanity.”

“We want to get the message out and tell people that institutions are not a home and that all people deserve a home that they choose, with the support they need,” says Bill Hogarth, People First member and Co-Chair of the DCS. “Institutions are not homes for people, especially Valley View. I was there for forty-two and a half years before I got out.”

“We believe that people living in institutions like Valley View Centre need the support of allies and friends to ensure that their needs are met in their community of choice. So we expect that the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living and People First of Saskatchewan will be welcomed as active participants and consultants in the closure planning and implementation,” says Faith Bodnar, Executive Director of SACL.

A formal statement will be made by the co-chairs of the DCS and other interested parties at a forum on deinstitutionalization at the Hilton Garden Inn in Saskatoon on May 3, 2007. Attached you will find a description of the forum, which will include stories from survivors of institutions and experts from across Canada. There will be a press conference at 3:30 p.m., but the press is encouraged to come for the whole day. There will be a remembrance ceremony and candle lighting at 2:45 p.m.

**For more information contact:**

**Faith Bodnar, Executive Director of SACL at (306) 955-3344 or (306) 222-3326.**

***DCS Mission:***

*On behalf of individuals who have an intellectual disability and who live in institutions, we will facilitate and ensure that they have access to a life in the community where they can exercise control over their lives.*